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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously amended): A cotton bale handling method comprising:
supporting the bale of cotton in a bale configuration using protective wrap
extending around the bale;
transporting a cotton bale with the protective wrap from a harvest location to a
cotton gin;
inserting an upper elongated wrap engaging structure into the bale;
engaging a lower portion of the protective wrap with a lower wrap engaging
structure;
tensioning a lower portion of the protective wrap with the lower wrap engaging
structure;
positioning the cotton bale adjacent a receiver, the step of positioning
including moving the tensioned lower portion of the protective wrap bale in a
conveying direction against a severing device to facilitate removal of the cotton and
draping of the protective wrap over the upper elongated wrap engaging structure;
separating the protective wrap from the cotton while the cotton bale is
positioned adjacent the receiver; and
transferring cotton from the bale away from the wrap into the receiver for
processing by the cotton gin.

Claim 2 (previously amended): The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein
the step of tensioning includes rotating the lower wrap engaging structure.

Claim 3 (previously amended): The method as set forth in claim 2 wherein
the step of severing includes supporting a knife structure adjacent the receiver, the
step of tensioning includes tensioning the wrap adjacent the knife structure, and
engaging the tensioned wrap and the knife structure to form a single slit in a direction
corresponding to the conveying direction of motion.

Claim 4 (original): The method as set forth in claim 2 wherein the step of
severing comprises supporting a knife adjacent an end of the receiver and moving